

Please use my auto draft or credit card info to pay registration fees_____

Or



I have attached a check to pay registration fees_____

First Fulshear Early Learning Center

2026-2027 School year fees

Please circle the days that you want to enroll your child in

Preschool Tuition Ages 2-4

8:45-2:45 T/TH \$345.00/month

8:45-2:45 MWF \$485.00/month

8:45-2:45 5 days \$795.00/month

Kinder-Bridge age 5

8:45-2:45 5 days only \$795.00/month

Preschool early care

7-8:45 T/Th \$100/month

7-8:45 MWF \$150.00/month

7-8:45 5 days \$250.00/month

*Children must be enrolled in regular care to qualify for early or late care.

Preschool after school care

2:45-6:00 T/Th \$125.00/month

2:45-6:00 MWF \$175.00/month

2:45-6:00 5 days \$300.00/month

Registration Fees

T/Th- \$175.00

MWF- \$200.00

5 days- \$300.00

Semester supply fees

T/Th- \$100.00 per semester

MWF- \$150.00 per semester

5 days- \$225.00 per semester

Elementary after school care Morgan Elementary only

Kindergarten-5th grade M-F 3:00-6:00 pm \$300.00/month

Registration fee \$100 Supply fee \$60/semester

(August tuition for school age is pro-rated)

Tuition is collected September through May. Classes start in late August TBA

Payment and registration contract

We offer a Sibling discount of 10% off second child only in our **preschool** program for regular tuition, not before or after school care.

We reserve the right to cancel a class if minimum enrollment is not met. Late pick up fee \$1.00 per minute. Children may not be dropped off before 8:45 unless enrolled in early care. Kids may not be picked up after 2:45 unless enrolled in late care.

We generally follow LCISD calendar for holidays and school closings, however you will receive an official FFELC calendar in August 2026. We generally start preschool at a later date than LCISD, After school will start with LCISD

There are not deductions to tuition for holidays, emergency closures or absences.

Payment Agreement Contract:

I understand that my child's first tuition payment is due on September 1st. If I register but do not give notice that my child will not be attending by August 1st, I will be responsible for September tuition.

I understand that tuition is due by the 5th of every month or a late fee will be accessed of \$15.00 for late tuition.

I understand that I must submit a 30 day notice if I decide to withdraw my child from the school.

I understand that all registration fees are non-refundable for any reason.

Payments can be made by auto draft from a bank account or by credit card (2.75% fee for credit cards only)

Child's name _____

Parent's Signature _____ date _____



Admission Information

Use this form to collect all required information about a child enrolling in day care. The day care provider gives this form to the child's parent or guardian. The parent or guardian completes the form and returns it to the day care provider before the child's first day of enrollment. The day care provider keeps the form on file at the child care facility.

Section 1 – General Information

Operation's Name Fulshear Early Learning Center		Director's Name Jill Samoff	
Child's Full Name		Child's Date of Birth	
Child Lives With: <input type="radio"/> Both parents <input type="radio"/> Mom <input type="radio"/> Dad <input type="radio"/> Guardian			
Child's Home Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code			
Date of Admission 08/18/2025		Date of Withdrawal	
Name of Parent or Guardian 1			
Address of Parent or Guardian 1, if different from the child's			
Name of Parent or Guardian 2			
Address of Parent or Guardian 2, if different from the child's			
List phone numbers below where parents or guardian may be reached while child is in care.			
Parent 1 Area Code and Phone No.		Parent 2 Area Code and Phone No.	
		Guardian's Area Code and Phone No.	
Custody documents on file? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No			
In case of an emergency, when the parent or guardian cannot be reached, call:			
Name of Emergency Contact		Relationship	
		Area Code and Phone No.	
Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code			
I authorize the child care operation to release my child to leave the child care operation only with the following persons. Please list name and phone number for each. Children will only be released to a parent or guardian or to a person designated by the parent or guardian after verification of ID.			
Name		Area Code and Phone No.	
Name		Area Code and Phone No.	
Name		Area Code and Phone No.	

Section 2 – Consent Information

1. Transportation

I give consent for my child to be transported and supervised by the operation's employees. Check all that apply.

- ☒ For emergency care ☒ On field trips ☒ To and from home ☒ To and from school

2. Field Trips

- ☒ I give consent for my child to participate in field trips.
☒ I do not give consent for my child to participate in field trips.

Comments

We do not take field trips

3. Water Activities

I give consent for my child to participate in the following water activities. Check all that apply.

- ☒ Water table play ☒ Sprinkler play ☒ Wading pools ☒ Swimming pools ☒ Aquatic playgrounds

1. Is your child a competent swimmer? ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, your child is required to wear a life jacket while in or near a swimming pool.

2. Does your child have any physical, health, behavioral or other condition that would put them at risk while swimming? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, your child is required to wear a life jacket while in or near a swimming pool.

Note: A competent swimmer can enter and exit a pool safely on their own, tread water or float on their back for one minute, and swim 25 yards with no assistance.

4. Receipt of Written Operational Policies

I acknowledge receipt of the facility's operational policies, including those for the following. Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discipline and guidance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for release of children |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suspension and expulsion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illness and exclusion criteria |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency plans | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for dispensing medications |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for conducting health checks | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Immunization requirements for children |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safe sleep | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meals and food service practices |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for parents to discuss concerns with the director | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures to visit the center without securing prior approval |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for parents to participate in activities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for supporting inclusive services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promotion of indoor and outdoor physical activity including criteria for extreme weather conditions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedures for parents to contact Child Care Regulation (CCR), DFPS, Child Abuse Hotline and CCR website |

5. Meals

I understand the following meals will be served to my child while in care. Check all that apply.

- ☒ None ☐ Breakfast ☐ Morning snack ☐ Lunch ☐ Afternoon snack ☐ Supper ☐ Evening snack

6. Days and Times in Care

My child is normally in care on the following days and times.

Day of Week	A.M.	P.M.	Day of Week	A.M.	P.M.
Monday			Friday		
Tuesday			Saturday		
Wednesday			Sunday		
Thursday					

Section 3 – Authorization For Emergency Medical Attention

In the event I cannot be reached to arrange for emergency medical care, I authorize the person in charge to take my child to:

Name of Physician

Area Code and Phone No.

Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code

Name of Emergency Care Facility

Area Code and Phone No.

Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code

I give consent for the facility to secure any and all necessary emergency medical care for my child.

 Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date Signed

Section 4 – Requirements for Exclusion from Compliance

- ☐ I have attached a signed and dated affidavit stating that I decline immunizations for reason of conscience, including religious belief, on the form described by Health and Safety Code Section 161.0041 submitted no later than the 90th day after the affidavit is notarized.
- ☐ I have attached a signed and dated affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination that I am an adherent or member of.

Section 5 – Vision Exam Results

Right Eye 20/ Left Eye 20/ ☐ Pass ☐ Fail

Signature

Date Signed

Section 6 – Hearing Exam Results

Ear	1000 Hz	2000 Hz	4000 Hz	Pass or Fail
Right:				<input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail
Left:				<input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Fail

Signature

Date Signed

7. Receipt of Parent's Rights

I acknowledge I have received a written copy of my rights as a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at this facility.

 Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date Signed

Attached

8. Child's Special Care Needs

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental allergies | <input type="checkbox"/> Limitations or restrictions on child's activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food intolerances | <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable accommodations or modifications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Existing illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive equipment, include instructions below |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous serious illness | <input type="checkbox"/> Symptoms or indications of complications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injuries and hospitalizations in the past 12 months | <input type="checkbox"/> Medications prescribed for continuous long-term use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Explain any needs selected above.

Does your child have diagnosed food allergies? ☐ Yes ☐ No Food Allergy Emergency Plan Submitted Date: _____

Child day care operations are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III. To learn more, visit www.ada.gov/resources/child-care-centers/. If you believe that such an operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at 800 514-0301 (voice) or 800 514-0383 (TTY).

 Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date Signed

9. School-Age Children

My child attends the following school

School Area Code and Phone No.

My child has permission to: ☒ walk to or from school or home ☒ ride a bus ☒ be released to the care of their sibling younger than 18 years old

Authorized pick up or drop off locations other than the child's address.

X

X

X

X

X

☐ Child's required immunizations, vision and hearing screening are current and on file at their school.

Section 7 – Admission Requirement

If your child does not attend pre-kindergarten or school away from the child care operation, one of the following must be presented when your child is admitted to the child care operation or within one week of admission.

- ☐ Health Care Professional's Statement: I have examined the above named child within the past year and find they are able to take part in the day care program.
- ☐ A signed and dated copy of a health care professional's statement is attached.
- ☐ Medical diagnosis and treatment conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious organization, which I adhere to or am a member of. I have attached a signed and dated affidavit stating this.
- ☐ My child has been examined within the past year by a health care professional and is able to participate in the day care program. Within 12 months of admission, I will obtain a health care professional's signed statement and submit it to the child care operation.

If selected, Health Care Professional Name

If selected, Health Care Professional Street Address, City, State and ZIP Code

Health Care Professional Signature

Date Signed

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date Signed

Section 8 – Vaccine Information

The following vaccines require multiple doses over time. Provide the date your child received each dose.

Vaccine	Vaccine Schedule	Dates Child Received Vaccine
Hepatitis B	Birth (first dose)	
	1 – 2 months (second dose)	
	6 – 18 months (third dose)	
Rotavirus	months (first dose)	
	second dose)	
	se)	
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis		
Haemophilus Influenza Type B		
	12 – 15 m.	
Pneumococcal	2 months (first dose)	
	4 months (second dose)	
	6 months (third dose)	
	12 – 15 months (fourth dose)	

Please attach copy of immunizations

Vaccine	Vaccine Schedule	Dates Child Received Vaccine
Inactivated Poliovirus	2 months (first dose)	
	4 months (second dose)	
	6 – 18 months (third dose)	
	4 – 6 years (fourth dose)	
Influenza	Yearly, starting at 6 months. Two doses given at least four weeks apart are recommended for children who are getting the vaccine for the first time and for some other children in this age group.	
Measles, Mumps, Rubella	12 – 15 months (first dose)	
	4 – 6 years (second dose)	
Varicella	12 – 15 months (first dose)	
	4 – 6 years (second dose)	
Hepatitis A	12 – 23 months (first dose)	
	The second dose should be given six to 18 months after the first dose.	

Section 9 – Physician or Public Health Personnel Verification

Signature or stamp of a physician or public health personnel verifying immunization information above.

Signature _____

Date Signed _____

Section 10 – Varicella for Chickenpox

Varicella, the vaccine for chickenpox, is not required if your child has had chickenpox disease. If your child has had chickenpox, complete the statement: My child had varicella disease, chickenpox, on or about [date] and does not need varicella vaccine.

Signature _____

Date Signed _____

Section 11 – Additional Information About Immunizations

For more information about immunizations, visit the Texas Department of State Health Services website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/public.shtm.

Section 12 – Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

Section 13 – Privacy Statement

HHSC values your privacy. For more information, read our privacy policy online at <https://hhs.texas.gov/policies-practices-privacy#security>

Section 14 – Signatures

Child's Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date Signed

Center Designee Signature

Date Signed

X

[Signature]

8-18-26



Automated Payment Processing
Safe – Convenient – Easy

We are excited to offer the safety, convenience and ease of Tuition Express[®]—a payment processing system that allows secure, on-time tuition and fee payments to be made from either your bank account or credit card.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION FOR BANK ACCOUNT and CREDIT CARD

I (we) hereby authorize (business name) _____ to initiate credit card charges to the below-referenced credit card account **(Section A)** OR, initiate debit entries to my (our) checking or savings account, indicated below **(Section B)**. To properly affect the cancellation of this agreement, I (we) are required to give 10 days written notice. Credit union members: please contact your credit union to verify account and routing numbers for automatic payments. Check with the center for accepted credit card types.

COMPLETE ONE SECTION ONLY

**No fees for auto checking draft
2.75% fee for all credit card payments**

SECTION A (Credit Card)

Cardholder Name	Phone #
Cardholder Address	City State Zip
Account Number	Expiration Date
Cardholder Signature	Date

SECTION B (Bank Account)

Your Name	Phone #			
Address	City State Zip			
Bank or Credit Union Name	Bank or Credit Union Address	City	State	Zip
Routing Transit Number (see sample below)	Account Number (see sample below)	<input type="checkbox"/> Checking	<input type="checkbox"/> Savings	
Authorized Signature	Date			

For Official Use Only

Date Received
Employee Signature

John Sample Mary Sample 123 Nice Street Anytown, USA	BANK OF THE WEST 555.555.5555	00226
Pay to the order of: Attach Voided Check Here	\$	
Deposit slips not accepted	Dollars	
123456789010	100013000	0226
Routing Number	Account Number	Check Number

A service of



Student/family Information

Child's name _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Mom's Name _____ cell # _____

Mom's email address _____

Mom's occupation _____

Dad's Name _____ cell # _____

Dad's email address _____

Dad's occupation _____

Does child live with both parents in the same house? Yes No
If in separate homes, please explain how custody
works _____

Siblings in the home and
ages _____

Pets? _____

Child's
fears? _____

What helps calm your
child? _____

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Has your child ever been in preschool before? _____ if yes,
where? _____

Does your child require specific special needs in the classroom? If yes, please
explain _____

Is your child under the supervision of a doctor or specialist for any social emotional or developmental
issue that we should know about to better assist your child in the classroom?

Any medical issues we should be aware
of? _____

Allergies? _____

Sleep habits or issues we should know
about? _____

Any recent changes that we should know about that may cause your child stress or
anxiety? _____

Anything else we should know about your
child? _____

Do you have a church home? _____

Provider's Guide to Parent's Rights

Senate Bill 1098 from the 88th Legislative Regular Session added Section 42.04271 to the Human Resources Code and states that a parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

- Enter and examine the child-care facility during its hours of operation and without advance notice;
- File a complaint against the child care facility;
- Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
- Review the child-care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access the child care facility's online compliance history;
- Have the facility comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child;
- Be given the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that:
 - Video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
 - The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and
 - The parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility;
- Obtain a copy of the facility's policies and procedures handbook;
- Review the facility's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum; and
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the facility.

Required Notifications

- The child care facility must provide written notice to the parent or guardian of any other child captured in a video before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- The child care facility must provide a parent or guardian with a written copy of the rights no later than the child's first day at the facility.

Helpful Tips

Since a parent may perceive an action taken by a child care facility as retaliatory, keep in mind:

- Documentation is essential in supporting your actions; and
- Follow the suspension and expulsion policy outlined in your operational policies and update your policy, if needed.



Safe Sleep

DO

- ❖ Do put infants to sleep alone on their backs in a crib or on another firm surface with a tight-fitting bottom sheet.
- ❖ Do dress the infant lightly and control the room temperature.
- ❖ Do use pacifiers as it may lower the risk of sudden death.
- ❖ Do supervise infants closely at all times.

DON'T

- ❖ Don't put an infant to sleep with blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, or bumper pads.
- ❖ Don't swaddle an infant.
- ❖ Don't cover an infant's face or let the infant cover its face with anything.
- ❖ Don't allow an infant to sleep in a restrictive device or equipment not intended for infant sleeping such as bouncers, car seats, rockers, infant swings, sofas, futons or bean bags.
- ❖ Don't put infants to sleep on soft beds such as pillow-tops, water beds, or memory foam. If the infant leaves a dent, it's too soft.
- ❖ Don't add mattresses or supplemental padding to pack-n-plays. Use only as directed per manufacturer instructions.
- ❖ Don't expose babies to smoke or e-cigarette emissions.
- ❖ Don't allow an infant to sleep for extended periods of time without checking on them frequently.

Choking Prevention

- ❖ Pay close attention to what your child is eating and what your child puts in his or her mouth.
- ❖ The way food is prepared may increase the risk for choking.

Common Foods that May Cause Choking and Should NOT be fed to Children under 4:

- ❖ Firm, smooth, or slippery foods that slide down the throat before chewing, such as:
 - Whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls;
 - Whole pieces of canned fruit
 - Hot dog shaped foods (sausages, meat sticks, cheese sticks)
 - Hard or round candy, jelly beans
- ❖ Small, dry, or hard foods that are difficult to chew or swallow whole, such as:
 - Popcorn
 - Raw vegetables or fruit
 - Hard pretzels
- ❖ Sticky foods that do not break apart and are hard to remove from the airway, such as:
 - Spoonful of peanut butter
 - Tough or large chunks of meat
 - String cheese
 - Marshmallows
 - Chewy fruit snacks

*The key to prevention is **Supervision***

Tips for Serving Table Food to Young Children

- ❖ Cook foods until soft enough to pierce easily with a fork.
- ❖ Cut soft food into thin slices or small pieces no larger than ½ inch. Cut foods like hot dogs and string cheese into short strips instead of round pieces.
- ❖ Cut grapes, cherries, berries, and melon balls in half lengthwise and then cut into smaller pieces.
- ❖ Spread peanut butter thinly.



Water Safety

Outside the house

- ❖ **Never** leave children alone around water whether it is in a pool, wading pool, drainage ditch, creek, pond, or lake.
- ❖ Constantly watch children who are swimming or playing in water. They need an attentive adult or certified lifeguard watching and within reach.
- ❖ Secure access to swimming pools. Use fences, self-closing and latching gates, and water surface alarms.
- ❖ Store water toys away from the water when not in use so they don't attract a small child.
- ❖ Don't assume young children will use good judgment and caution around water.
- ❖ Be ready for emergencies. Keep emergency telephone numbers handy and know CPR.
- ❖ Require each child who is unable to swim, or at risk of injury or death when swimming, to wear a properly fitted and fastened U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket before entering and while in a swimming pool.

Inside the house

- ❖ **Never** leave small children alone near any container of water. This includes toilets, tubs, aquariums, or mop buckets.
- ❖ **Never** leave a baby alone in a bath for any reason.
- ❖ Keep bathroom doors closed and secure toilet lids with lidlocks.
- ❖ Make sure small children cannot leave the house through pet doors or unlocked doors to access pools or hot tubs.

TV and Furniture Safety

- ❖ Secure TV's so they cannot tip over and mount flat TV's to the wall so they can't be pulled down.
- ❖ If you have a box TV, put it on furniture that is low, stable, and designed for the size and weight of the TV.
- ❖ Use brackets, braces, or wall straps to secure furniture to the wall.



Car Safety

- ❖ **Always** use car and booster seats. The law says you must put kids, under the age of two, in a car seat that faces backward and is installed in the back seat of the car. Older kids must be in booster seats or car seats until they are 8 years old or reach 4-foot, 9-inches tall.
- ❖ Make sure that kids' arms, legs, fingers, and toes are safely inside before closing doors.
- ❖ **Never** leave children unattended in the car.
- ❖ **Never** leave your car keys where children can get them.
- ❖ Keep car doors and trunks locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway.
- ❖ Use reminders that a child is in the back seat. Leave something you need in the back seat, like your purse or phone or leave a stuffed animal or toy in the front seat.
- ❖ Talk to children about the dangers of playing around cars and watch them closely when they're around cars.

Additional Resources

Search Texas Child Care

- ❖ <http://www.txchildcaresearch.org>

ABCs of Safe Sleep for Babies

- ❖ <https://www.getparentingtips.com/babies/safety/ABCs-of-safe-sleep-for-babies/>

Water Safety for Kids

- ❖ <https://getparentingtips.com/toddlers/safety/water-safety-for-kids/>

Kids and Cars

- ❖ <https://www.kidsandcars.org/>

Safe Kids

- ❖ <https://www.safekids.org/>

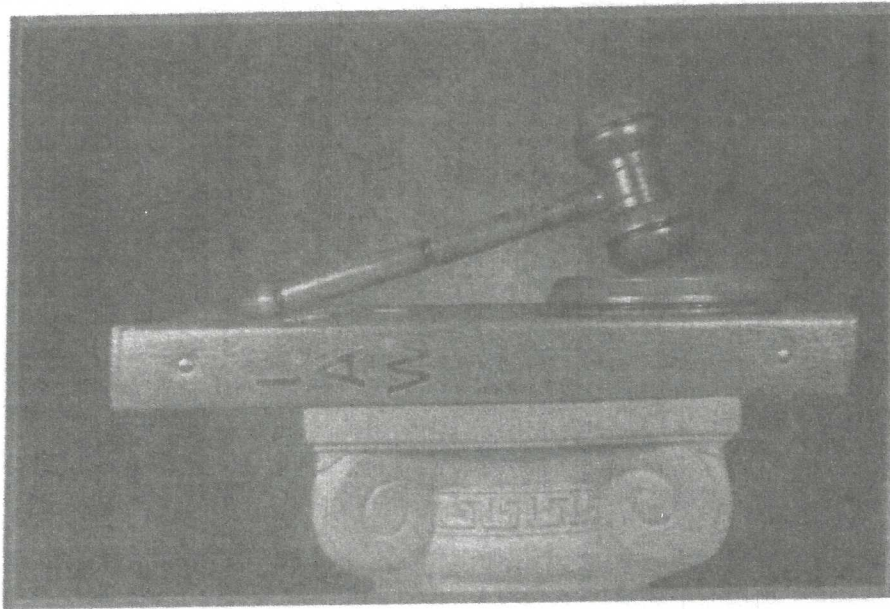
USDA Food and Nutrition

- ❖ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn>

DPS Child Passenger Safety Information

- ❖ <https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/media-and-communications-office/child-passenger-safety-information>

What You Need to Know about Disability Laws: The Americans with Disabilities Act



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is good news for parents who have children with disabilities. Simply stated, the ADA says your child may not be excluded from child care programs because of a disability. What do we mean when we say disability? A disability is described as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits your child's major life activities, such as communicating, hearing, seeing, or walking. To fully meet the definition (and to be eligible for special education and related services) as a "child with a disability," your child must have educational issues related to the disability.

You may be wondering what effect this law has on you and your family. To be specific, here is a list of items that will help you determine if your child is receiving all the educational services for which she is eligible.

- Does his child care program use developmentally appropriate practices, which emphasize individual growth patterns, strengths, interests, and experiences of young children, to design appropriate learning environments for all the children?
- Is the attitude of the care provider one of "I can make this work!" If the adults in your child's life are not actively working to make the changes necessary, you may wish to look elsewhere for care.
- The child care facility should be willing to make simple changes in the typical activities and routines of the program in order to meet your child's needs. For instance, using tactile play materials for a child with a vision impairment. The facility is not required by law to make extensive or very expensive changes in order to be able to serve your child.
- The child care facility should not have program eligibility standards which have the effect of screening out children with disabilities, such as requiring the child to be toilet trained. With that particular requirement, some children may never qualify.

-
- Make certain that your child's caregiver is aware of anything that your child particularly needs to be comfortable. For example, does she need to wear hearing aids?
 - Determine whether or not your child's caregiver is willing to integrate your child's developmental and therapy goals into daily routines and activities (e.g., using sign language to expand communication with children at snack or circle time; allowing children with intellectual disabilities more time to complete activities).
 - What barriers could easily be removed in order to increase your child's participation? For instance, widening pathways between activity areas for walkers and wheelchairs or repositioning materials at the child's level for visual or motor activities are simple changes that can be made for children with mobility issues. Costly structural changes are not required if affordable alternatives are available.
 - If your child needs special skills from staff, such as sign language, are they willing to find someone who can do that? Remember that the cost to the provider must be reasonable (under the law).
 - The provider cannot refuse a child because of increased insurance rates or charge a higher fee solely because your child has a disability.

In fact, many child care providers will already be in compliance with the ADA without any prompting on your part. Just be aware of your rights and find a child care program that appreciates and values your very special child.



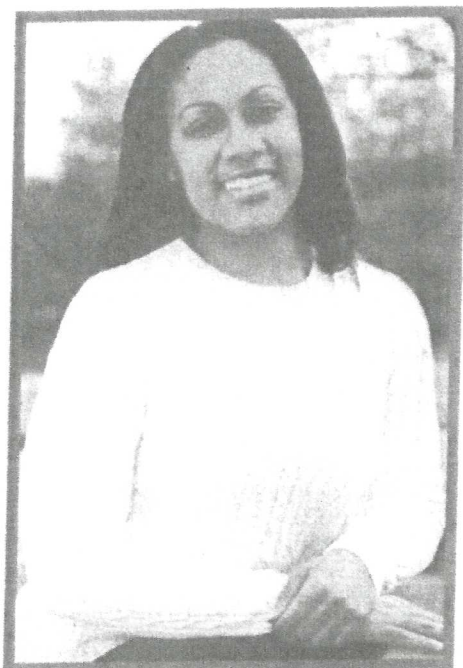
Ways Child Care Providers Can Prepare for Enrolling a Child with Special Needs

Starting a new school is a BIG event, and not just for the child! It is both exciting and worrisome for children and parents, and even child care providers! And this is especially true for children who have been identified as having a disability or special learning need.

If you are a family child care provider, an early childhood teacher, or a child care program administrator, here are some suggestions for specific, practical things that you can do to prepare yourself, the child, the parents, and other children in your program for enrollment of a child who has special needs. With preparation, you can help the transition into your program go more smoothly for everyone.

Preparing Yourself

- Keep in mind, first and foremost, that children with and without disabilities share more similarities than differences. All children have the need to be cared for by warm and nurturing caregivers, to feel as if they belong to a community, to establish positive social relationships with peers, and to be given opportunities to learn and develop to their full potential.
- Learn as much as you can about the child's specific special need and about his ability to manage everyday tasks or situations that are common in your child care program. Parents will be your most important source of information, but you'll also want to take the time to learn more about the special need from trustworthy information sources, such as the "Learn the Signs. Act Early" website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>).
- If you are part of a child care center, have honest dialogue among staff about concerns and needs. Seek out resources, professional development opportunities, and support services in the community to increase teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in working with this child and family.
- Make every effort to visit the family's home at least once before the child starts. Meeting him in his own comfortable, familiar space will give you a much better picture of him at his best. You'll be more likely to hear open, honest communication from parents when they are in their own home as well.
- Be sure that you obtain a copy of the child's IFSP or IEP if the family has one. If you are not familiar with the IFSP/IEP requirements or processes, or with your role and responsibility as the child's teacher/caregiver, be sure that you learn from the family, a previous program, or an early intervention or special education service provider in your area. For more information, see the document, "What Do Child Care Providers Need to Know about IEPs and IFSPs?"



Preparing the Child

The following suggestions would be most appropriate for children who are developmentally within the preschool age range, but they can be adapted for younger children.

- Encourage parents to talk positively about starting a new child care program, but also to allow the child to talk openly about fears or worries. Children's books about starting a new school can be a big help for parents in getting a conversation started.
- Suggest to parents that they count down with the child by creating a paper chain with just enough "links" to equal the days until start day. Make it part of the daily routine to have the child tear off the link for that day, then count how many days/links are left. This concrete representation of time will help many children feel less anxious and more excited.
- Create a photo album or video featuring the child care environment and give it to the family a few weeks in advance of starting. Include: 1) important places, such as the bathroom and the place where lunch is served; 2) important people that the child will see every day; and 3) the most common toys, equipment, and activities, especially those that parents indicate are favorites.
- Give the child "practice" in the new environment. Encourage the family to visit the school at least twice; first when there are fewer children present and play is unstructured and again when the day is in "full swing."

Preparing the Parents

- Be sure to let parents know that you have an open-door policy and that they are welcome to visit any time. Make sure they have copies of the daily schedule, the parent policy handbook, and any other documents that will help them know what to expect. If at all possible, give these to the parents far enough in advance that they will have time to discuss any concerns, questions, or issues with you before the child starts.
- Negotiate with parents ahead of time a strategy for easing the child into the new environment. Depending on the needs of the child and the availability of a parent, encourage a "graduated" entry. One option is to start the child with a shorter day and gradually increase to the full time. Another option is to start with the parent staying for the entire day and then gradually decreasing the amount of time the parent spends there.

Preparing the Other Children

- If the child has a disability that children will readily notice, consider asking one of the parents to come to the school without the child to "introduce" her to the other children with photos or videos. When children see this new child in photos or videos, they will see not only the ways that her disability or delay makes her different, but also the many ways that she is similar to them. Give the children the opportunity to ask any questions about the new child without her there.
- If the parents are not able to come talk to the children, ask if they would provide a photo album or share a list of some of the child's favorites (e.g., favorite food, song, color, toy, etc.) that you can use in talking to the children. Ask parents to share with you anything that they would like the children and staff to know about their child.
- You can also share a children's book or two about starting a new school and encourage them to think about how the new child might feel and what they could do to help the child feel welcome. Children love to be given the opportunity to help and will usually step up to the challenge when we communicate the message that we believe they are capable of it.

In addition to preparing the people involved, you'll also need to think about ways that you may need to adapt the environment and activities for this child. All this preparation will go a long way toward lowering the fear and anxiety for everyone. Including children with special needs can be challenging at times, but can also provide the most amazing, joyful experiences for everyone!

Source:

eXtension (2012). *Ways Child Care Providers Can Prepare for Enrolling a Child with Special Needs*.